

President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Issues

Following is a transcript of President Reagan's news conference last night in Washington, as recorded by The New York Times:

OPENING STATEMENT

Good evening, please be seated. I have an opening statement.

On December 27th, terrorists, as we know, attacked Rome and Vienna airports. For international airports, a series of atrocities which have shocked the conscience of the world. It's clear that the responsibility for these latest attacks lies squarely with the terrorist known as Abu Nidal and his organization. The number of his victims included 19; among them five Americans including Natasha Simpon, an 11-year-old girl. Many others from around the world were wounded.

And we shall make every effort to bring Abu Nidal and his terrorists to justice. But these murderers could not carry out their crimes without the sanctuary and support provided by regimes such as Colonel Qaddafi's in Libya.

Libya's longstanding involvement in terrorism is well documented—and there is irrefutable evidence of his role in these attacks. The Rome and Vienna murders are only the latest in a series of brutal terrorist acts committed with Qaddafi's backing.

Qaddafi and other Libyan officials have publicly admitted that the Libyan government has abetted and supported the notorious Abu Nidal terrorist group which was directly responsible for the Rome and Vienna attacks.

Qaddafi called them "heroic actions." I call them criminal outrages by a outlaw regime. By providing material support to terrorist groups, which attack U.S. citizens, Libya has engaged in armed aggression against the United States and its allies. It has engaged in international law, just as if he had used its own armed forces.

We have urged repeatedly that the world community act decisively and in concert to exact from Qaddafi the high price for his support and encouragement of terrorism. The United States has already taken a series of steps to curtail most direct trade between our two countries, while encouraging our friends to likewise. Terrorists, however, they are not them, must be denied sympathy, safe haven and support.

Executive Order Signed

In light of this latest evidence of Libya's growing role in international terrorism, it is clear that steps taken so far have not been sufficient. Tougher, more comprehensive measures are required by the international community.

Accordingly, I signed today an executive order stating that the policies and actions of the Government of Libya constitute a threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Congress has been notified of my decision. I have also signed an executive order stating that the policies and actions of the Government of Libya constitute a threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Congress has been notified of my decision. I have also signed an executive order stating that the policies and actions of the Government of Libya constitute a threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Congress has been notified of my decision.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Medicare Payment

Q. Thank you Mr. President, that's very nice of you and I appreciate it. Sir I want to call your attention to a real problem that's been bothering me country today. The hospitals and the doctors are sending the elderly sick home too soon before they're really ready to go and that puts a burden on their families. This all seems to be based on the Medicare payment formula, and I know that when you go across the land from Gramm-Rudman for fear that the Medicare payment may be reduced. I'm sure you can't have your experts make a solution to this.

A. We have been. Sarah, I can't tell you what the final decision has been on this. We have been looking at this entire program. Things that can be done and should be done and also the possibility we're looking at as to whether we can't find something to take care of catastrophic illness and tried to do this when I was Governor in California, and I couldn't get any public interest in it at all. I guess everyone has a feeling it will never happen to them. But we are looking at this as to what we can do with regard to some of the problems that have arisen because, as you know, the program has expanded in cost greatly.

Medical care and both health care generally has been one of the highest factors in the increase in inflation. So I promise you we're looking at it.

Q. Sir, has anyone ever thought about the fact that Canada gets some medical care with a little extra tax. (G) but practically free. Why couldn't we start something like that?

A. Well, we're looking for answer.

Attitude of Allies

A. Mike? Q. Mr. President, you said in your opening statement that there is irrefutable evidence that Col. Qaddafi was involved in the airport attacks. The European allies seem less than convinced. What proof is there of Qaddafi's involvement in these attacks?

A. Mike, the only thing I can say in answering that question, and I can't do all that you would like to do because there are things that should not be revealed, but I can assure you that we have the evidence of the amount of training that has been given—that he has denied. I don't think he's capable of telling the truth about these things. But we do know—we know the location of the training camps for terrorists and we also know that Abu Nidal has moved his headquarters there—into Libya. And we know with confidence, and I would like to remind you that when these—in the first moments or days or hours following these last two, he did openly

immediately, and others no later than Feb. 1, impose a total ban on direct import and export trade with Libya, and for international airports. They prohibit commercial contracts and travel transactions with Libya, including travel-related activities such as the sale of airline tickets or the issuance of visas to carry out this order.

I call on all Americans in Libya to leave immediately. Those who violate these orders should know that they will be subject to appropriate penalties upon their return to the United States. Let the Government of Libya understand that it is fully responsible for the welfare of those Americans still in Libya, and that Libya will be held accountable for any attempt to harm or restrict their freedom to depart.

Our differences are not with the people of Libya, but with Col. Qaddafi and his regime. We're taking these steps after much reflection, and in full awareness of the economic consequences to the United States. These steps are taken to incur as a result.

To be treated as a Pariah

Civilized nations cannot continue to tolerate in the world of man a regime that is so blatantly and so brazenly self-interested. Qaddafi deserves to be treated as a pariah in the world community. We urge our friends in Western Europe and elsewhere to join with us in isolating him. Americans will not unilaterally guarantee the safety of Libya to take commercial advantage of our departure. We will consult with all our allies to pursue the goal of broader cooperation.

Italy's Prime Minister Craxi, in whose office I was once a guest, has taken steps to ensure that no such attacks occurred, properly emphasizing the necessity not only of coping with terrorists, but identifying those states that guarantee terrorists protection and the possibility to arm and organize themselves to carry out their bloody work.

Qaddafi's Libya is such a nation, and we call upon other nations to join in denying it the status of a pariah and diplomatic privileges of the civilized world.

If these steps do not end Qaddafi's terrorism, I promise you that further steps will be taken.

Thank you and that concludes my statement. But before I answer your questions, let me extend a warm welcome back to one of your colleagues, Sarah McLachlan. Sarah's been absent for a while, but she's back now and I'm delighted. Sarah's a true Washington institution, has a lot of history, and she's been as aggressively and fairly. Sarah's kept several of my predecessors' eight children, and she's been a mother over the years, and I'm truly honored that she chose tonight for her public appearance. I hope she'll be as good as she would be. So you see why we haven't been holding press conferences. We're waiting for Sarah to come back! And in honor of her return, I'd like to offer Sarah the first question. Don't worry Mike, you'll get the second one. Sarah?

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Libya AT A GLANCE

History

Since antiquity, Libya has been ruled by foreigners. The Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, and, more recently, the Turks and the Italians have ruled all or part of the country.

Italy invaded in 1911 and in 1934 declared the name Libya, which had once been used by the Greeks for all of North Africa except Egypt.

King Idris I, Emir of Cyrenaica, led the resistance to Italian rule between the World Wars. From 1943 to 1951, the British and the French divided administrative responsibility for much of the country. Under terms of the 1947 peace treaty with Italy, the United States relinquished all claims to Libya.

In 1949, the United Nations General Assembly declared that Libya should become independent before Jan. 1, 1952. It became independent on Dec. 24, 1951.

King Idris, who presented Libya in the United Nations negotiations, ruled the Kingdom of Libya until 1969, when he was overthrown by a military coup.

The Libyan Arab Republic, with Colonel Qaddafi as its first leader, was proclaimed in 1977.

In 1977, an elected General People's Congress changed the country's name to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Colonel Qaddafi remained chief of state and secretary general of the Revolutionary Command Council.

In 1980, he gave his office the name of "Revolutionary Council." He is now referred to as "Leader of the Revolution" by the controlled press, and continues as de facto head of state.

Geography

Libya covers an area of 980,000 square miles. It extends for 910 miles along the coast of North Africa, and, except for a narrow coastal strip, is made up almost entirely of desert.

Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi

Sunday near Tripoli.

cent attacks but in these two attacks the perpetrators are either dead, killed on the scene, or they're wounded and in hospitals under arrest. But again, here is a better opportunity now. This was something of a delicate matter, and Qaddafi himself has referred to more suicide terrorist actions; in other words, finding some souls that are fanatic enough that they can be told that they got a free ride up their own lives to kill someone else, innocent people.

The only actual case where there were terrorists, and there were and we know their location and where they were trying to go, and we brought them down, and that was the Achille Lauro case, and turned them over to the Italians at their request. Well, it was their territory and their ship and they wanted to do the prosecuting and they will be prosecuted.

We have—I know it appears that we have not done anything, but I'd like to tell you something that we have done. We have actually referred to the last year and know that we have aborted 128 terrorist missions. Now I won't go any further and I'm not going to tell you how this was done, but in our intelligence and working with the other countries, we have been able to anticipate and, as I said, that that many terrorist missions.

Q. Mr. President, if I may follow up on what you were saying in this particular case, in terms of going to the source, going after Abu Nidal or going after the Libyan training camps, is there anything going to be next time for a military strike. And I wonder, given your criteria, which are that there has to be a direct link between the terrorists and the target and that no innocent civilians can be

Q. Mr. President, you have said that your policy toward terrorists is swift and effective retribution. And after the Achille Lauro case, you said, "You can run but you can't hide." But isn't this one more case where there is no retribution and where the people behind the terrorism have in effect been able to hide?

A. Now you mentioned the people behind the terrorism. I think that's the point that I'm making. The fact that all this talk that there's been about harsh talk and no action and so forth, could I recall your statement that you're going to be more aggressive against the United States that took place in Lebanon: the bombing of our embassy in Beirut, the policies and actions of the Government of Libya constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States and hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat.

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People

The population is almost entirely Arab, and the religion is almost entirely Muslim. Arabic is the official language. Libya has a population of just under four million. Tripoli, the capital, has a population of 1.2 million.

Economy

The discovery of oil in the 1960's brought unexpected wealth and power to Libya. Libyan leaders identified with the Arab cause and called for a severance of ties with the West.

After negotiations in 1970, British military installations at Tobruk and a United States air base, Wheelus Field, were closed. Several thousand Italians were expelled from Libya in 1971.

foreign libraries and cultural centers were closed. In the next decade, however, many foreigners, including several thousand Americans, drifted back to fill the need for skilled technicians in the oil and gas fields and in other emerging industries supported by oil revenue.

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Libya Trade Was Low Before Ban

By BARNABY J. FEELEY

New restrictions on trade with Libya announced last night by President Reagan are expected to have little economic impact on the country.

Falling oil prices, which have forced Libya to reduce spending on imports and major development projects, and previously announced restrictions have left the United States with little economic leverage over the Government of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi.

In the executive order he signed yesterday, Mr. Reagan ordered all American companies to halt doing business with Libya. Companies that remain in the country face criminal prosecution.

Trade between the two nations accounted for 2 percent of Libya's imports and a small fraction of 1 percent of the United States' exports in 1984, the last year for which figures are available. The United States' direct investment in Libya at the end of 1984 was valued at \$449 million, out of total overseas investments of \$228 billion. More than 90 percent of the United States investment in Libya was in oil production.

Small Role for Occidental

Officials of American companies affected by the Reagan order could not be immediately reached for comment.

Before the announcement, the Occidental Petroleum Corporation, the operator of three Libyan oilfields and the largest American investor in Libya, stressed that its Libyan interests amounted to only 1 percent of its gross assets. The company said it had always com-

plied with all Federal regulations involving its dealings with the Qaddafi Government.

In 1979 Occidental's chairman, Dr. Armand Hammer, became the first oil industry leader to negotiate a substantial rise in oil prices with the Qaddafi regime, then a year old. That price rise was a major steppingstone in the growth of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Occidental and other multinational oil companies are the only American businesses with substantial investments in Libya, although several engineering companies have been consultants on major construction projects and numerous other companies supply Libya with various types of equipment.

All content that they pulled American employees out of the country after restrictions on travel to Libya were introduced by the Reagan Administration in 1981.

The State Department, which estimates that 1,000 to 1,200 Americans are in Libya, agreed.

"Given the absence of an embassy and the fact that it is illegal to travel to Libya, Americans who go aren't telling us," said Donald Brown, a State Department spokesman. "We are pretty confident that, by and large, they are not employees of American firms."

Except for journalists, individuals who remain in Libya for any reason face a prison term and fines, under the Reagan order.

Occidental and many other American companies doing business with Libya date their roots from the oil boom of the late 1950's, long before Colonel Qaddafi

came to power. Most have been gradually running down their investments in recent years as frictions between Libya and the United States have intensified.

Engineering companies typically operate in Libya through subsidiaries based in London or Rome. They have replaced Americans with foreign nationals in dealing with the Libyans, and even those employees are usually based outside the country if possible. For instance, Foster Wheeler, an engineering concern based in Livingston, N.J., has an Italian subsidiary with four major contracts and smaller ones in Libya, but only one Italian employee based there full time.

It was unclear how the new restrictions would affect foreign subsidiaries. Previous attempts to extend the reach of American regulations have proved difficult for the minister and politically unpopular in Western Europe.

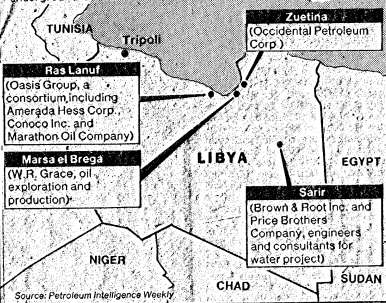
Numerous engineering companies said their business with Libya had already been restricted by Libya's economic problems. The El Paso Products Company of Ocala, Tex., said it had plans to build a polypyrone plant with a license from a Libyan company had been "on a back burner" for some time.

"We haven't had any communication for over a year," said Werner Osterberg, vice president in charge of cement for the Kujala Corporation, Philadelphia-based consulting engineers who had been doing design work for Libya on two oilfield projects.

One major project that is going ahead involves the laying of more

Major U.S. Companies in Libya

American businesses with investments in Libya. Locations of oil companies indicate terminals from which they ship. The water project would construct a system of wells and pipelines to carry water from an underground lake near Sarir to arid coastal towns and cities.



than 1,200 miles of concrete pipeline from a desert site where an underground reservoir has been discovered by Libya's thirty coastal cities. The Price Brothers Company of Dayton, Ohio, and Brown & Root, a Houston subsidiary of the Halliburton Company of Dallas, have been major contractors engaged to Dong Ah, the South Korean construction company that is building the pipeline.

Of more than 25 American oil companies that fled to Libya in the 1950's and 1960's, just Occidental, Amara Hess, Conoco, Mara-

thon Oil and W. R. Grace remain. Some of the subsidiaries, such as the Mobil Oil Corporation, have outstanding legal claims against Libya involving payment for their interests when they withdrew in response to tax and operating changes that the oil companies claimed, made operations unprofitable and violated their licensing agreements.

Of the American companies in Libya, only Occidental operates an oilfield there. It does so without American employees, the company said.

Why Reagan Shuns Force

Continued From Page 1

extremely cautious in dealing with the Libya. Despite singling it out as an "outlaw nation" at the start of his Administration in 1981, he rejected a military strike against it unless there was evidence that such an attack would be in response to a specific action.

The first such action, mostly limited to appeals to Americans in Libya, then numbering more than 6,000, to leave, were instituted after intelligence reports of a Libyan "suicide" being sent to the United States to assassinate public officials. Mr. Reagan reportedly took the position that if any officials were killed, then military action would be appropriate.

In 1982, another review of relations with Libya led to the decision to ban the import of oil from there, but Mr. Reagan showed no interest in a military response, officials said. The only time military action was used against Libya was in August 1981 when two carrier-based F-14s shot down two Soviet-made Libyan planes that challenged the right of the Sixth Fleet to sail into the Gulf of Sidra.

The effect of Mr. Reagan's steps today was to virtually sever all remaining direct American commercial ties with Libya. But they have also set the stage for a new squabble within the Atlantic alliance if he presses the allies to join in a sanctions campaign. John S. Whitehead, the Deputy Secretary of State, is supposed to go to Europe soon to try to win some allied support, which until now has been lacking.

Trade Down Sharply

The effect of the President's action seemed anticlimactic because American trade, which in 1980 reached a high of \$7.8 billion, had already dropped to less than \$300 million for the first 10 months of last year. Moreover, since the sanctions did not apply to foreign subsidiaries of American companies, their effect was even more muted.

Subsidiaries were not included because Secretary of State George P. Shultz wanted to avoid a direct clash with the Europeans reminiscent of the feud in 1981-82 over American efforts to block subsidiaries in Europe from helping build the Soviet natural gas pipeline to Western Europe.

Since the Administration had already imposed economic sanctions on Libya in 1981 and 1982, the most significant being the ban on all imports of Libyan oil, there was an expectation by some in Washington last week that the President might choose a military option in the aftermath of the attacks on the Rome and Vienna airports last month.

The Administration maintained that the reason it did not take these actions had been from the Palestinian faction led by Abu Nidal, which it said had been aided by Libya.

"Libya," the President said tonight, "has engaged in armed aggression against the United States under established principles of international law."

The Defense Department had positioned the Sixth Fleet for a military strike, put Air Force bombers on alert in Britain and moved men and equipment to Sicily. But in examining the possibilities, Mr. Reagan decided, according to aides, that there were more reasons not to bomb Libya than to do so.

New Call to Americans

Several considerations were cited by aides. They said they were troubled by the 1,000 to 1,500 Americans living in Libya, in defiance of Mr. Reagan's previous requests that they leave. Even though the Administration believes they were given fair warning to leave, Washington was concerned that they not be taken prisoner in the event of an American attack. That is why Mr. Reagan again included a call tonight for all Americans to leave Libya and a warning that Libya would be held responsible should any harm befall them.

Mr. Reagan was also insisting that any target be clearly and unambiguously linked to Abu Nidal group, a position shared by Defense Secretary Frank R. Miller but not by Mr. Shultz or Robert C. McFarlane, the former national security adviser. Mr. McFarlane argued on Monday in a television appearance that there was enough evidence linking Libya to past acts of terrorism to carry out a military attack without waiting for a "smoking gun."

Aides said Mr. Reagan was concerned that American planes might be shot down by the newly acquired SAM-3's in Libya, which would turn the regulation into a fiasco. Moreover, diplomatic messages from the White House warned that any American military action on Libya would provide extremists with a field day throughout the Arab world and wreck chances for any progress in peace talks.

Administration officials insisted, however, that in limiting his actions tonight to severing American economic relations with Libya, the President was not permanently foreclosing the use of force. They said it was important to take seriously his warning about "further steps."

"The next time military will be the only option," one official said.

President Breaks Off All U.S. Economic Relations With the Libyan Government

Continued From Page 1

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Americans in Libya

Q. Mr. President, would your response to the terrorist incident have been different if there were not more than a thousand Americans still in Libya?

A. Well, very obviously they have to be a consideration. As you will recall, if we had not taken some economic actions there were roughly 8,000 Americans in Libya. And we asked it did not order and did not declare an emergency, but asked them to come back, and now there are between a thousand and fifteen hundred there. But, yes, you have to consider them as potential hostages.

Qaddafi's Mind

Q. If I may follow up? You said earlier that you thought Mr. Qaddafi was faking. Do you seriously think that he might be emotionally or mentally unbalanced?

A. Oh, no, I won't—I use that in the term we use in conversation with someone. No, I just think that in a real sense, he is pursuing a revolutionary cause that could affect a great many countries. And we have to look at his performance in Chad, in which he then violated the word that he had given to France with regard to his aggression there and other places. So, I just—I feel that you have to be on guard against virtually any kind of act.

Risk of Travel

Q. Mr. President, how safe or how risky do you think it is for Americans who travel to Europe these days? And are you satisfied that our allies have been able to get on with their security as you asked them to do last summer?

A. I think there's been great improvement in airport security, and yet when you have suicide attacks, as we did in Rome and Vienna airports, you have to ask yourself what can be done about that, to prevent it. I have to feel that—that, as a matter

New Farm Chief

Q. Mr. President, will you be looking for a working farmer to replace Secretary of Agriculture Block, who resigned today?

A. Well, I certainly am going to want someone just as Jack was, who has all the experience that is necessary in that field. And yes, it would be fine if we came up with a working farmer.

Q. And do you agree with Secretary Block that we've turned the corner on the farm economy and are headed for better times?

A. I think we have. The farm program—and he stayed until the farm program was completed and signed, and it is one that's going to take a little patience for a time. You can't do something instantly, pull out a rug that's been there for a great many decades, but we think that we have a program that is going to help maintain an income for the farmer at the same time that we get agriculture back out to market control, and not Government regulation and control. I think we all ought to heed the fact—I have the greatest sympathy for them. And I think that we have a great responsibility because a lot of their problems come from Government instead of Government helping. And the proof of that is if you look at those areas of farming that are not a part of the Government programs and subsidies that we are not having the economic problems that the other part of farming is having.

A. Oh, all right. Well, thank you to very much. Good night.

Q. Mr. President, we'd like to do this again next month. Sarah will be here.

Reagan Insists Cuts Can Cure Deficit but Doesn't Bar Tax Rise

By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7.—President Reagan insisted tonight that the Federal budget deficit could be reduced through spending cuts and continued economic growth, but he was careful not to rule out the possibility of increasing taxes eventually.

Maintaining the position he has held throughout his Presidency, Mr. Reagan said that a tax increase would "kick back the economy and might even trigger a slump."

The President went on to say that once spending had been reduced to a bare minimum, "then it will not now." He said he was looking for a tax increase at Mr. Reagan's first full-scale news conference in nearly four months. The President made these points:

1. Polygraph, or lie detector, tests are sometimes useful in espionage investigations and have "led to a multitude of confessions of various crimes."

2. "He is considering some form of changes in the Medicare program to offset the elderly against the cost of 'catastrophic' illness."

3. "He will consider the possibility to naming an experienced farmer to replace Agriculture Secretary John R. Block, who resigned today."

Some of Mr. Reagan's senior advisers said that a possible tax increase so that budget targets could be met and military spending still raised.

But tonight, Mr. Reagan said, "The past has proven that every time tax rates are raised you've got some people in the economy who are raising a choice program of their own to spend that money, not to use it to reduce the deficit."

The President continued, "We're going to keep on trying over the next five years to get down to a balanced budget through spending cuts. Then, if that isn't enough and if we're convinced that we have government down to the absolute level, where it cannot go below that and perform government's functions and services, then it would be a time to look at revenues. But not now."

Q. May I follow up sir. Can you tell us what you know about their welfare?

A. We have no reason to believe that they are not—I hesitate to say well treated. Let us say that apparently they're in as reasonably good health as they can be in view of their incarceration.

Russians and Libya

Q. Mr. President, in connection with your next meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev, the Russians in response to the terrorist activity that we've been talking about this evening, made some very defensive statements of Libya and of Qaddafi, which you know they really Libya with a good deal of their military equipment and possibly some of the training, some of which may then be passed on to the terrorists. I would like to know when you sit down and talk to General Secretary Gorbachev, how you intend to bring this up and suggest to him that they could be more forthcoming in areas outside of your direct talks and make the climate better?

A. Yes, this was very definitely one of our purposes or one of our topics in our one-on-one conversations, and it was with a suspicion of them and it was, I had brought, in which I said it was obvious that both of us suspected the other—distrusted the other—and that it was going to take more than words but take deeds for us to eliminate that distrust, and if we could do that, then we could get on with the business of reducing arms and so forth instead of looking at each other as antagonists all the time.

Q. Do you consider it wise to be directly communicating with Gorbachev about this recent incident and about possibly using his leverage with Qaddafi?

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2d Summit Meeting

Q. Mr. President, are you now looking forward to a second summit with Mr. Gorbachev in September or the fall perhaps rather than in June? And what has led to that slippage?

A. Well, I don't know. Someone on his side has suggested later in the fall. We thought that June would be a nice time to do it and not get around to waiting and saying that it's got to be a year between them. In fact, the last words of the Secretary General to me when we said goodbyes were "We're

friends in Western Europe and elsewhere to join with us in isolating him."

In a letter to the Speaker of the House, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., in connection with his executive order, Mr. Reagan said, "I hereby report that the United States is not going to declare a national emergency."

In the letter to Mr. O'Neill, a Massachusetts Democrat, the President said these economic activities were being prohibited:

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only the latest in a series of brutal terrorist acts committed under Qaddafi's backing. Qaddafi and other Libyan officials have publicly admitted that the Libyan Government has abetted and supported the notorious Abu Nidal terrorist group, which was directly responsible for the Rome and Vienna attacks.

Qaddafi called them heroic actions," said Mr. Reagan. "I call them criminal outrages by an outlaw regime."

Mr. Reagan said that earlier American steps against Libya "have not been sufficient."

"Tougher, more comprehensive measures are required by the international community," he added. "Accordingly, I have signed today an executive order stating that the policies and actions of the Government of Libya constitute a threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

Mr. Reagan said that people who violated his executive order would face "appropriate penalties."

REMEMBER THE NEEDLEST